

EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Gary, IN

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

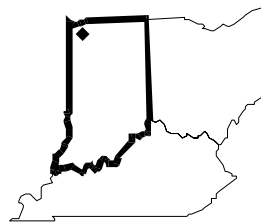
EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Gary for a Brownfields Pilot. Gary was also selected to receive additional funding for assessments at Brownfields properties to be used for greenspace purposes. A former industrial center, Gary contains many abandoned factory and mill sites. As the steel industry has declined, so has the city. The workforce in Gary dropped from more than 20,000 in the 1970s to 6,000 in the 1990s, as the population decreased by 40 percent. In 1998, the unemployment rate was 7.1 percent, more than twice that of the rest of Indiana. The population is 89 percent minority, with approximately 25 percent of the residents living below the poverty line.

The city successfully partnered with East Chicago and Hammond, Indiana, for federal Empowerment Zone designation in 1999. There has been extensive public involvement on development related issues, with meetings being held both to solicit input and to educate community members.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Gary, IN

Date of Announcement:
May 2000

Amount: \$200,000
Greenspace: \$50,000

Profile: The Pilot will assess contamination and plan the redevelopment of numerous properties around the Gary Airport, including an abandoned sand mine site. The city will develop a plan for resource conservation and a recreation area on a portion of the site.

Contacts:

Department of
Environmental Affairs
(219) 882-3000

Regional Brownfields Team
U.S. EPA - Region 5
(312) 353-3161

Visit the EPA Region 5 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/R5Brownfields/>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

OBJECTIVES

The goal of the Pilot is to work with the city's partners to identify, assess, and redevelop local brownfields within a 200-acre area now owned by the city, in the area around the Gary Airport. The site is at the center of a proposed light industrial and commercial complex. The redevelopment process will create jobs, provide training opportunities for local residents, and establish safe and productive industries. The redevelopment process also will facilitate an infusion of tax revenue to the city, further improving the quality of life for residents.

The City of Gary will use greenspace funding to conduct environmental assessments of the southern portion of an 80-acre former sand mine called the J-Pit. Potential sources of contamination include byproducts of illegal dumping and surrounding junkyards. The proposed restoration plan for the pit is to fill it with groundwater to form a lake. The banks of the new lake would be restored through plantings and construction of wetlands, and a trail would be constructed around the lake, which would connect to a new city park adjacent to the site.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as a part of this Pilot include:

- Conducting Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments;
- Developing cleanup and redevelopment plans for identified site reuse;
- Identifying financial and other resources necessary to fund cleanup scenarios;
- Identifying funding strategies for redevelopment;
- Developing redevelopment plans for the J-Pit project that incorporate natural resource preservation and enhancement with economic redevelopment; and
- Conducting outreach activities to encourage community participation.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.